

Wright appointed business manager of Bricklayers #1

Keith Wright is the new business manager of Portland-based Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Local 1.

He succeeds John Mohlis, who left late in his term to take a job as executive secretary-treasurer of the Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council.

Wright, 54, has been a union bricklayer for 28 years, starting as an apprentice in the former Eugene Local 6 in 1978. A native of Flint, Michigan, Wright worked on construction jobs in numerous states before settling in Oregon in 1978.

He has served as Local 1's president and as a field representative since 1994. He resigned as president earlier this year to take over as business manager.

Local 1's new president is Matt Eleazer, who also was hired as a field representative.

"Work is good, and it should remain good through the summer," said Wright, who also is a delegate to the Oregon State and Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Councils, and to the Northwest



Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Local 1 Business Manager Keith Wright (right) presents Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski with an inscribed trowel at the union's annual pin dinner April 1. Kulongoski assisted in presenting 25, 40 and 50-year pins.

Oregon Labor Council.

"We have a lot of work in Central Oregon (Madras and Bend), which should give us some in-roads for organ-

izing," he said.

Local 1 has increased its membership from 650 to 745 over the past year, and has 50 apprentices in training.

On April 1, the union hosted its annual retiree pin dinner in Portland. The keynote speaker was Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski. More than 225 people attended.

Kulongoski, who is seeking re-election, said it is the American labor movement that created this nation's middle class. "We need more people to pick up the tools of the trade to build America. You helped build America. Without a skilled workforce, this state and this country cannot move forward."

Receiving pins were: **50-Year Gold Cards** — Jack Berg, Jim Montague, Harlan Neal, Hermann Opgenorth, Robert Carter, Norman Paveletz and Charles Young. **40-Year Awards** — Eugene Wyttenberg and Lonnie Pietz. **25-Year Awards** — Darrell Mills, Robert Modena and Steven Johnson.



Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski (right) chats with 50-Year Gold Card recipients from left: Jack Berg, Harlan Neal and Hermann Opgenorth. In the background is Local 1 Business Manager Keith Wright.

AFL-CIO asked to rescind Solidarity Charter deadline

The new Change to Win federation sets a May 1 deadline, otherwise it will suspend per capita.

The Change to Win labor federation says its unions will suspend their Solidarity Charter per-capita payments to all state bodies and central labor councils on May 1 if the national AFL-CIO doesn't rescind new eligibility and deadline rules for charter applications.

The Change to Win federation was formed last September following the departure of the Service Employees International Union, the United Food and Commercial Workers, the Teamsters and UNITE HERE from the AFL-CIO in July 2005.

In January, the United Farm Workers left the AFL-CIO to join CTW, and the Laborers Union says it's only a matter of time before it splits from the AFL-CIO. The Laborers are already affiliated with CTW. [The Carpenters Union, which disaffiliated from the AFL-CIO more than four years ago, also belongs to the Change to Win federation.]

Following the breakup, state labor federations and central labor councils in virtually every state were hit so hard by the loss of per-capita fees that they pressured the national AFL-CIO to devise a way for CTW locals to remain affiliated. Otherwise, many councils would go broke.

After numerous proposals and counterproposals, the top union officials came up with Solidarity Charters — one-year pacts that would allow Change to Win union locals to rejoin state and/or local bodies, with full voting and election rights — but without having to belong to the national AFL-CIO.

To date, 860 Solidarity Charters have been issued nationwide.

On Jan. 30, AFL-CIO President

John Sweeney sent notice to all state and local AFL-CIO labor federations announcing May 1, 2006, as the deadline to file for Solidarity Charters. That date was set, he said, in order to satisfy Federal Election Commission requirements for the use of membership mailing lists in 2006 campaign activities.

In the missive, Sweeney also said that the Solidarity Charter program authorized by the AFL-CIO Executive Council applied to only five unions: UFCW, Teamsters, SEIU, Carpenters and UNITE HERE.

"Eligibility for Solidarity Charters is limited to locals of these unions. Locals of the Farm Workers or of other unions not affiliated with the national AFL-CIO are not eligible to affiliate," the edict read.

That didn't sit well with the Change to Win federation.

Gene Pronovost, president of Tigard-based UFCW Local 555, which has signed Solidarity Charters with the Northwest Oregon Labor Council and several other labor councils (but not with the Oregon AFL-CIO), told the Northwest Labor Press that the agreement reached at the national level allows for solidarity charters for any Change to Win union.

The Change to Win federation sent notice to the AFL-CIO stating that unless all CTW locals are eligible for Solidarity Charters, no CTW local will participate in the charter program.

The issue was discussed at the Northwest Oregon Labor Council Executive Board and delegates' meetings on March 27, and a motion was passed unanimously to oppose the union limitation and deadline date.

NOLC Executive Secretary-Treasurer Judy O'Connor was asked to submit a letter to Sweeney stating their opposition. The letter was sent March 31.



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